

FirstNet Hosts Tribal Outreach Workshop to Design Process for Broad Participation in the Creation of the Public Safety Broadband Network

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WASHINGTON — Board member Kevin McGinnis and Deputy General Manager TJ Kennedy of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) convened a one-day workshop to seek guidance from tribal representatives and Indian Country professionals on how to approach tribal outreach and education.

Held on November 4, 2013 in Washington DC, the workshop was attended by 18 participants.

These public safety and telecommunications experts have a history of working effectively with multiple tribal nations on telecommunications projects. They were asked to provide input to the design of an outreach communications and staffing plan.

FirstNet leaders remain committed to informing and involving as many of the 566 federally recognized tribes as possible. Walt Lamar, a tribal subject matter expert with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications, facilitated discussion with FirstNet about working effectively with tribal nations.

Kevin McGinnis, Chief North East Mobile Health Services was appointed as the FirstNet Board lead to oversee tribal outreach in June. "We are grateful to the workshop participants for sharing their insights and educating FirstNet on the most effective ways to reach the tribes. We want to ensure we spread the word on how FirstNet can make a difference to the wellbeing of their communities." McGinnis discussed the promise of FirstNet to improve emergency medical response and underscored the mandate to provide coverage in rural areas.

TJ Kennedy described the anatomy of the FirstNet network and outlined the process for soliciting user and coverage needs. He emphasized the importance of participation. "Help us involve tribal members in discussions with FirstNet on the unique public safety needs in their tribal communities."

About FirstNet

FirstNet will provide emergency responders with the first high-speed, nationwide network dedicated to public safety. FirstNet is designed to improve communication among local, state, regional, tribal and national emergency services personnel. The broadband data network will help save lives and protect the health and safety of all Americans. It will be built using LTE, the most advanced wireless technology available today. FirstNet fulfills a fundamental need of the public safety community for a single, mission-critical communications system enabling force multiplier effectiveness. Overseen by representatives of public safety, government and the wireless industry, FirstNet is an independent entity within the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (www.firstnet.gov).

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